STATISTICAL COMMISSION
Seventh session
Item 5 of the provisional agenda

Revision of the 1949 Draft Recommendations for the Improvement of International Migration Statistics

(Memorandum submitted by the Secretary-General)

Introduction

The Population Commission, at its seventh session, under item 8(b) of its agenda, considered Revision of the 1949 Draft Recommendations for the Improvement of International Migration Statistics (E/CN.9/95), a report prepared by the Secretariat in collaboration with the International Labour Office.

The Commission appointed a Committee which studied the question in detail. After considering the recommendations of this Committee, the Commission adopted the text contained in that report with some modifications. The Commission’s report on this item, containing these modifications, is reproduced below.

Extract from report of Population Commission

"The Population Commission considered the report prepared by the Secretary-General with the collaboration of the International Labour Office on the Revision of the 1949 Draft Recommendations for the Improvement of Migration Statistics (E/CN.9/95) and, in particular, the Annex of that report setting forth proposed revised recommendations on this subject."
"The Commission noted that, in accordance with its previous request, the proposed revisions were based on detailed consultations between the Secretary-General and the International Labour Office, interested Governments, specialized agencies and international organizations, and, in addition, took into account the views expressed by the Statistical Commission and the Sub-Commission on Statistical Sampling.

The representatives of the Ukrainian SSR and the USSR proposed that the statistical slips (E/CN.9/95, Annex 1, para. 30), should include entries regarding the migrants' social status and the reasons that impelled them to migrate. Following these proposals, the Commission included a question on 'status (as employer, employee, etc.)' in the recommended statistical slips, and added a paragraph provisionally numbered 28 bis to the recommendations.

The Commission also considered a number of proposed amendments to the Annex of document E/CN.9/95, presented verbally by several representatives. One of these concerned the dividing line between temporary and permanent migration. A proposal to revert to the 1932 dividing line, where permanent migration is defined on the basis of an intended stay of 'one year or over', instead of 'a period exceeding one year', proposed in document E/CN.9/95 by the Secretary-General and the International Labour Office, was rejected.

The Commission adopted the Recommendations for the Improvement of Migration Statistics presented in the Annex to the Secretary-General's report (E/CN.9/95) with the modifications set forth in Appendix III to this Report.

The Commission noted that the Secretary-General had distributed its report (E/CN.9/95) to the members of the Statistical Commission and will make available to them, at their seventh session, the results of the deliberation of the Population Commission. Since both Commissions have given attention, at several sessions, to the revision of the 1949 Draft Recommendations of the

Population Commission for the Improvement of Migration Statistics, the Population Commission suggests that definitive action on the Recommendations could be taken at the seventh session of the Statistical Commission, and that it should not be necessary to refer back to the Population Commission modifications that may be adopted by the Statistical Commission.

"The Commission was gratified to learn that the process of detailed consultation with Governments and international agencies, recommended by the Commission for the revision of its 1949 Draft Recommendations on Migration Statistics, had already borne fruits. In several countries, the authorities responsible for the collection and tabulation of these data have become more clearly aware of desirable and feasible improvements of the quality of these data, aimed particularly towards international comparability, and have taken administrative steps to achieve them. There has been an increase in the volume of statistical material on migration made available by some countries. Progress has also been made, in certain instances, in improving the accessibility of the data. However, much remains to be done in order to secure adequate current migration data. The existence of a definitive set of international standards recommended to Governments will be instrumental in bringing about improvements in the quality and comparability of international migration statistics.

"The Commission is aware that certain countries may wish to request the assistance of the Secretary-General and the International Labour Office for effecting improvement in their migration statistics. Having taken note of the information given by the Secretary-General regarding plans for a training programme in this field, the Commission requests the Secretary-General to expedite, within the scope of the arrangements he has already initiated, the execution of these plans in the countries requesting such training.

1/ E/CN.9/100, paras. 8 and 50.
APPENDIX III

"The modifications made by the Population Commission in adopting the Recommendations for the Improvement of International Migration Statistics presented in the Annex to the Secretary-General's report (E/CN.9/95) are set forth below. The paragraph numbers below are those of that Annex.

Paragraph 4. Delete the clause beginning 'this quality'.

Paragraph 5. Amend the last sentence to read: 'The recommendations provide for statistical information on movements of refugees and transferred populations; figures for these categories may be shown separately.'

Paragraph 7. Place the words 'permanent immigrants' and 'permanent emigrants' in quotation marks.

Paragraph 13 bis. Under the heading 'Methods of collection' insert between paragraphs 13 and 14, a new paragraph, provisionally numbered 13 bis, reading as follows: 'It is recommended that the attention of countries with a common land frontier should be drawn to the technique of compiling joint statistics of crossings of that frontier which they might in some circumstances adopt to their mutual advantage. Joint arrangements for obtaining migration statistics might also be made with advantage by groups of countries which have simplified the procedures for crossing their frontiers.'

Paragraph 14. Add the word 'civilian' before the word 'travellers'.

Paragraph 16. Categories 3 of arrivals and departures, add: '(dependents being classified in category 4)'.

Paragraph 16. Under 'Special classes' for arrivals or departures, replace 'assisted immigrants' by 'immigrants enjoying special facilities, e.g. government financial assistance; participation of intergovernmental organizations in cost of passage; facilities under bilateral or multilateral agreements', and replace 'emigrants leaving under government assisted migratory scheme' by 'emigrants enjoying special facilities, e.g. ...' (as above).
Paragraph 17. Replace the beginning of the paragraph by the following:

'Migration defined with reference to a period of, for example, two years. Some countries are interested in the number of "permanent immigrants" and "permanent emigrants" defined on the basis of an intended stay (or absence) of longer duration than that considered above. In such cases it is recommended that in order to maintain the international comparability of migration statistics, the one year definition recommended above be used and the following sub-classifications be made (the period of two years being mentioned as an example):'

Paragraph 27(ii). For 'nations' read 'nationals'.

Paragraph 27(v). At the beginning of the sub-paragraph insert the words 'in the case of persons of working age' and add to footnote (1) the words: 'The International Labour Office has prepared an International Classification of Occupations for Migration and Employment Placement (two volumes in three parts, Geneva, 1952).'

Paragraph 28. Delete sub-paragraph (c).

Paragraph 28 bis. Between paragraphs 28 and 29 insert a new paragraph, provisionally numbered 28 bis, reading as follows:

'It is recognized that in order to ascertain the reasons that prompt people to emigrate, special enquiries are required. Such enquiries would be undertaken by means of suitable questionnaires, either before the departure or after the arrival of the migrant.'

Paragraph 29. Replace the last sentence by the words: 'For this category, tabulations by usual occupation, for each sex separately, and by country of permanent residence, are the most important.'

Paragraph 30. Replace the words 'usual occupation' by the words 'usual occupation and status (as employer, employee, etc.) in country of emigration'.